



Environmental Audit and Inspection: Permits, Site Evidence and Pollution Investigation



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Introduction:

An environmental audit and inspection programme is how an operator or authority learns whether permit conditions are met at the stack, the outfall, the waste yard and the chemical store, yet many visits end with a tick-box protocol, weak evidence and findings nobody grades or follows up. This Core Concept course trains environmental officers, auditors and inspectors to plan audits by risk, read permits into checkable criteria, inspect emission and discharge points, gather defensible evidence, investigate pollution incidents and complaints, and produce an Environmental Compliance Audit Plan and Report for a case facility.

Course Objectives:

- Select the right type of environmental audit or inspection, from permit compliance and management system audits to due diligence and waste contractor audits, for a stated purpose
- Build a risk-based environmental audit programme and translate permit conditions, emission limit values and discharge consents into an audit protocol
- Inspect stacks, fugitive sources, effluent treatment, outfalls, waste storage areas, chemical stores and noise sources against permit and good-practice criteria
- Collect documentary, physical, photographic and testimonial evidence, including basic grab samples with chain of custody, that withstands challenge
- Grade environmental non-conformities by severity and write an audit report with root causes, corrective actions and verification dates
- Investigate pollution incidents and public complaints to establish source, pathway, receptor and cause, and record the findings

Target Audience:

- Environmental officers who check day-to-day permit conditions on emissions, discharges and waste at operating sites
 - Environmental auditors who plan and lead internal, second-party or contractor audits against permits and management system criteria
 - Pollution control and environmental inspectors who visit industrial, commercial and municipal facilities and respond to complaints
 - HSE staff who carry environmental duties alongside safety and must prepare sites for authority inspections
 - Waste, utilities and facilities coordinators who oversee effluent plants, waste yards and chemical storage areas
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Course Outline:

Day 1: Environmental Audit Types, Purpose and Criteria

- Environmental Audit Typology: Permit Compliance, Management System, Due Diligence and Waste Contractor Audits
- Multimedia Versus Programmatic Compliance Audit Scope Selection
- Audit Criteria Hierarchy: Permit Conditions, Consents, Corporate Standards and ISO 14001 Clauses
- Environmental Inspection Versus Environmental Audit Versus Self-Monitoring Returns
- Facility Environmental Risk Profile Screening Sheet

Day 2: Environmental Audit Programme, Permits and Protocols

- ISO 19011:2026 Audit Programme Principles, Objectives and Auditor Competence
- Risk-Based Audit Frequency Scoring by Emission Load, Receptor Sensitivity and Performance History
- Permit Condition Deconstruction: Emission Limit Values, Discharge Consents and Reporting Duties
- Environmental Audit Protocol and Question Bank Construction by Medium
- Pre-Visit Document Request: Monitoring Returns, Waste Transfer Notes and Spill Logs

Day 3: Field Inspection of Emission, Discharge, Waste and Chemical Points

- Stack, Abatement Plant and Fugitive Emission Source Walk-Round Checks
- Effluent Treatment Plant, Interceptor and Outfall Inspection Points
- Waste Segregation, Storage Compound and Transfer Documentation Verification
- Chemical and Fuel Store Bunding, Secondary Containment and Drainage Plan Checks
- Boundary Noise, Odour and Dust Observation Log

Day 4: Evidence, Sampling Basics, Interviews and Pollution Investigations

- Environmental Evidence Types: Documentary, Physical, Photographic and Testimonial
- Grab Sampling Basics, Sample Labelling and Chain of Custody Form
- Operator and Contractor Interview Technique Using Open and Probing Questions
- Pollution Incident Investigation: Source-Pathway-Receptor Model and Event Timeline
- Complaint Handling Log, Regulator-Style Unannounced Visit and Enforcement Follow-Up

Day 5: Case Facility Walkthrough and Environmental Compliance Audit Report

- Case Facility Briefing Pack: Permit, Site Plan and Monitoring History
 - Team Walkthrough of the Case Facility Against the Audit Protocol
 - Non-Conformity Grading Matrix: Major, Minor and Observation With Evidence References
 - Environmental Compliance Audit Report Drafting With Corrective Action Register
 - Audit Closing Meeting Simulation and Peer Challenge of Findings
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Skills You Will Gain:

- Environmental Audit Planning
- Permit Condition Interpretation
- Emission and Discharge Point Inspection
- Environmental Evidence Handling
- Chain of Custody Sampling
- Non-Conformity Grading
- Pollution Incident Investigation
- Environmental Audit Reporting

Why Attend This Course:

- Return with an Environmental Compliance Audit Plan and Report built on a case facility, ready to adapt to your own sites
- Turn dense permit wording into a protocol that inspectors can check line by line at the stack, outfall and waste yard
- Answer a pollution complaint or spill with a structured investigation that traces source, pathway and receptor
- Compare audit and inspection practice with peers from manufacturing, utilities, waste, oil and gas and municipal services

Conclusion:

Environmental audits and inspections change site performance only when permit conditions become checkable criteria, evidence is gathered with care and findings are graded and followed through. The course moves from audit types and criteria, through risk-based programmes, permit protocols and field inspection of emission, discharge, waste and chemical points, to evidence handling, basic sampling, interviews and pollution investigations. The final day applies these methods to a case facility and produces an Environmental Compliance Audit Plan and Report with a corrective action register.
